



## **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes National Program Office Significant Activities Report**

**On the Web at:  
[www.epa.gov/glnpo](http://www.epa.gov/glnpo)**

**March 2003**

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### **Toxics Continue Downward Trend**

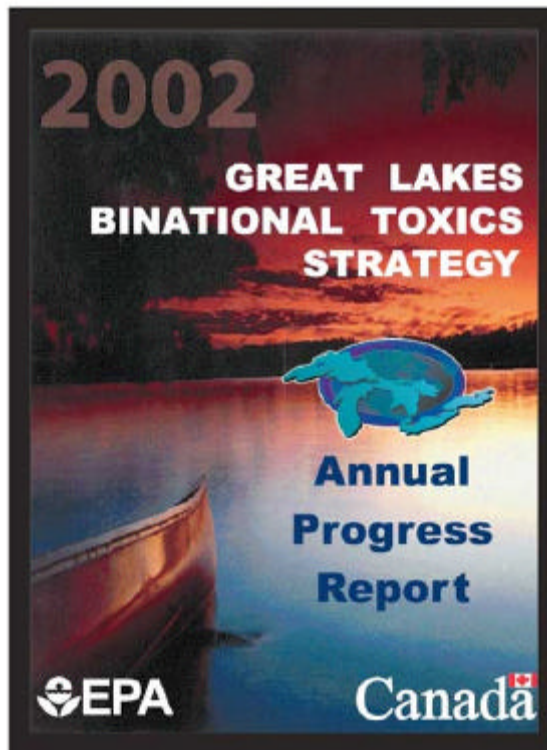
A just-released report by the USEPA and Environment Canada shows that levels of the most critical, persistent pollutants around the Great Lakes — including mercury, dioxin, benzo(a)pyrene, and hexachlorobenzene — continued to go down in 2002. According to the agencies' 2002 Great Lakes Binational Toxics Strategy Progress Report, these reductions are part of a downward trend in toxic substances in the Great Lakes over the last 15 years.

Since 1988, mercury emissions in Ontario have gone down 78 percent. On the U.S. side, mercury releases have been reduced by 40 percent since 1990. There was a similar substantial reduction in dioxin releases on both sides of the border since the late 1980s, 92 percent in the United States and 79 percent in Canada. Since 1990, hexachlorobenzene emissions went down 75 percent in the United States and 65 percent in Canada and benzo(a)pyrene went down 48 percent in Canada and 25 percent in the United States.

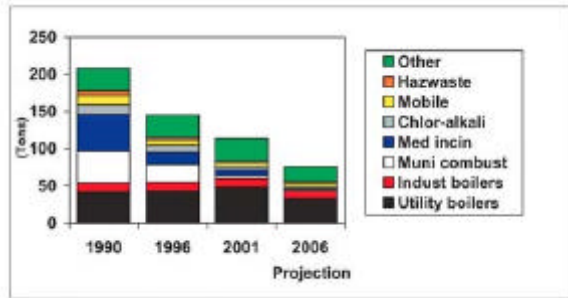
Success in reducing these pollutants has

been due to a combination of stronger regulations and voluntary actions. Some of the voluntary projects undertaken in 2002 were:

- Industry phase-out of the use of PCBs. Participating companies included Algoma Steel in Canada and Ford Motor Co. in the United States;
- The "Burn-it-Smart!" campaign in Ontario which promotes cleaner wood-burning technologies, helping to reduce emissions of benzo (a) pyrene; and
- The Burn Barrel and Household Garbage campaign which educates the public that burning garbage is a source of dioxin and promotes clean alternatives to this common practice.



Great Lakes Binational Toxics Strategy  
2002 Annual Progress Report



Trend in United States mercury emissions  
from Great Lakes Binational Toxics Strategy  
2002 Annual Progress Report

“The focus of this strategy is on pollution prevention and voluntary efforts,” said U.S. EPA Great Lakes National Program Manager and Regional Administrator Thomas Skinner. “The key to success is working in partnership with industry and improving public awareness. We need more innovative programs that offer incentives for those who emphasize pollution reduction.”

The Great Lakes Binational Toxics Strategy is an agreement between Canada and the United States to reduce or eliminate persistent, bioaccumulative toxic substances from the Great Lakes basin. Environment Canada, EPA, tribes, First Nations and other government, public and private partners work together toward that goal. 2002 marks the halfway point in the 10-year timeline of the strategy, which was established in 1997.

Level 1, or priority, substances identified by the strategy are mercury, PCBs, dioxins/furans, hexachlorobenzene, benzo(a)pyrene, octachlorostyrene, alkyl lead, aldrin, dieldrin, mirex, chlordane, toxaphene and DDT.

A copy of the Report, both in English and French, can be found at [www.binational.net](http://www.binational.net). Hard copies and CDs are available upon request.

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## Spring in the Air

With Spring approaching, interest in natural or sustainable landscaping is on the rise. GLNPO's Danielle Green gave presentations to two groups on landscaping that does well with minimal use of resources (water, fertilizer, pesticides) and sustains the natural ecology of the area through the use of native plants.

Along with Dan Welker of USEPA Region 3, Danielle spoke on “Sustainable Landscaping, The Hidden Impacts of Gardens” at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC on February 26<sup>th</sup>. The presentation was part of the Smithsonian's Horticultural Services Division winter in-service training program. Green and Welker presented information on the environmental impacts to air, water, land and biodiversity of traditional landscaping and offered alternatives such as using native plants in the landscape. Their presentation can be viewed on GLNPO's Green Landscaping with Native



Example of naturalistic landscaping

Plants web site ([www.epa.gov/glnpo/greenacres/](http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/greenacres/)).

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, Danielle Green gave a presentation entitled “Natural Landscaping” at the Highland Park Community Foundation workshop on ecological landscaping practices in Highland Park, Illinois. The workshop was specifically designed for landscapers and included an open discussion with city planners regarding development of a new landscaping code.

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### Legacy Act Prep

As featured in [last month's issue](#) of the *Significant Activities Report*, the Great Lakes Legacy Act of 2002 will provide greatly increased resources and focus to the issue of cleaning up contaminated sediments in Great Lakes “Areas of Concern.” GLNPO has been given the responsibility of carrying out the Legacy Act program. To ensure that the program hits the ground running when the first appropriations are made (expected in October 2003), GLNPO has been active in meeting with Great Lakes stakeholders, briefing them on what to expect, discussing potential cleanup sites, and listening to their ideas on ways to make the program effective. GLNPO has now met with nearly all of the Great Lakes state environmental agencies and with the Council of Great Lakes Industries. Upcoming meetings are planned with environmental groups and other non-governmental organizations.

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### Carp SWAT Team

GLNPO's Duane Heaton attended a meeting in Chicago on March 12th to discuss rapid response alternatives to keep the exotic invader Asian carp from reaching Lake



Asian “bighead” carp  
(photo courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

Michigan. The carp are being held back from migrating to Lake Michigan by an electric dispersal barrier in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. Meeting participants from local, federal, state, and Great Lakes-wide organizations agreed that if the bighead carp should get past the electrical barrier, they would reach Lake Michigan within 1 year at the most. If the carp reached the confluence of the Calumet Sag Channel and the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, which is approximately 7 miles upstream of the barrier (toward Lake Michigan), it would be much more difficult to contain them. Therefore, the meeting focused on monitoring and measures to keep them from reaching that point.

The participants discussed the existing monitoring programs for Asian carp in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal and how that monitoring could be used to provide an “early warning” that the fish had gotten past the electric barrier. This was followed by a discussion of possible rapid response actions should the monitoring show the carp had breached the barrier.

See the [May 2002](#), [September-October](#)

2002, [December 2002](#), and [last month's Significant Activities Report](#) for more details on the Asian carp and the electric dispersal barrier. (Contact: Duane Heaton, 312-886-6399, [heaton.duane@epa.gov](mailto:heaton.duane@epa.gov) or Marc Tuchman, 312-353-1369, [tuchman.marc@epa.gov](mailto:tuchman.marc@epa.gov))

### Watershed Leadership Academy



Shoreline along Lake Michigan's Door County

The Lake Michigan Watershed Leadership Academy was held March 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> on the campus of Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The event was the first time that the nine regional planning agencies and councils of government have met to discuss the state of Lake Michigan in relation to their watersheds. The [Lake Michigan LaMP 2002](#) and results from the [Lake Michigan Mass Balance](#) were presented. The audience of 75 were presented with a number of new tools, including the Lake Michigan on-line atlas, resource poster, the Region 5 Critical Ecosystem Teams Report, and the portal for the Great Lakes Center for Environmental and Molecular Sciences (<http://quickplace.erim.org/gleams>). William Painter from USEPA's Office of Wetlands and Watersheds in Washington, DC and Tom Davenport from USEPA Region 5 provided training on the Clean Water Act. A number of funding sources and successful projects were presented as models including Chi-

cago Wilderness and the Coffee Creek Watershed Conservancy. The sponsoring partners were GLNPO, the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, Western Michigan University, Great Lakes Commission, Lake Michigan Federation, Lake Michigan Forum and Plan Partners.

Follow up to the Watershed Academy will include local watershed meetings, a model and GIS training session and reporting out again at the State of Lake Michigan Conference planned for Fall 2003.

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### Great Lakes Day

March 20<sup>th</sup> was Great Lakes Day in Washington, DC. This annual event, sponsored by the Northeast-Midwest Institute and the Great Lakes Commission, consists of a Congressional Breakfast, followed by an Issues Briefing. The Congressional Breakfast features remarks on Great Lakes issues by Great Lakes Senators and Congressmen, while the Issues Briefing allows time for a variety of Great Lakes stakeholders to raise significant issues to an audience of legislators, their staffs, and other interested governmental and non-governmental Great Lakes stakeholders.

GLNPO's Director, Gary Gulezian, addressed the Issues Briefing participants on behalf of Tom Skinner, USEPA Region 5 Regional Administrator and Great Lakes National Program Manager.

Gulezian first updated the group on Great Lakes Strategy 2002. The Strategy was announced last April in Muskegon, Michigan. It presents a vision for restoring and protecting the Lakes. It identifies the major environmental issues in the Great Lakes basin, and it gives an overall plan for tackling



Gary Gulezian  
Great Lakes National Program Office Director

these issues. It also establishes common goals for federal, state, and tribal agencies to work toward. The Strategy is helping coordinate and streamline the efforts of the many agencies involved in protecting the Lakes. And it is helping improve programs that fulfill U.S. responsibilities under the binational (U.S.-Canada) Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

Developing the Strategy was an unprecedented effort, bringing together a partnership of 13 federal agencies, the tribes, and the Great Lakes states. The strategy contains more than 120 specific, measurable commitments by those partners. Those commitments include reducing the concentrations of toxins in fish, cleaning up contami-

nated sediment sites, de-listing Areas of Concern, and protecting wetlands.

Gulezian then shifted to the main focus of the presentation — the newly-passed Great Lakes Legacy Act of 2002 which authorizes a 5-year contaminated sediment cleanup program for Great Lakes Areas of Concern. Contaminated sediment is the main problem at all 31 of the U.S. Areas of Concern and sediment cleanups are needed to fully restore these rivers and harbors. Congress laid the foundation for addressing contaminated sediments in passing the Great Lakes Critical Programs Act of 1990, which authorized a research and demonstration program run by GLNPO entitled “ARCS,” which stands for Assessment and Remediation of Contaminated Sediment. Over a six-year period, this program developed sediment assessment tools to evaluate the extent of the contamination, and also allowed testing of some innovative treatment technologies.

The Research Vessel *Mudpuppy*, a ship specifically designed and outfitted to test sediment was built to support ARCS. The *Mudpuppy* has now been to almost all of the Areas of Concern. Using what was learned from the *Mudpuppy* and working closely with federal and state partners, nearly 2.2 million cubic yards of sediment have been cleaned up over the past five years.

Gulezian called the Great Lakes Legacy Act the next key step toward full cleanup of the Areas of Concern, building upon the lessons and tools of the ARCS program. Implementing sediment cleanups through the Legacy Act will help achieve the Great Lakes Strategy 2002 goal of cleaning up all 31 Areas of Concern by our target date of 2025.

A wealth of information on contaminated sediments, the Legacy Act, ARCs, and other topics can be found on the Web at: [www.epa.gov/glnpo/sediments.html](http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/sediments.html).  
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### Tracy Mehan Honored



G. Tracy Mehan (right) receives Lake Superior award from Steve Schlobohm in Washington, DC

Also on Great Lakes Day, March 20<sup>th</sup>, Steve Schlobohm of the U.S. Forest Service met with G. Tracy Mehan, USEPA's Assistant Administrator for Water to present him with some mementos to recognize his contributions to the Lake Superior Binational Program. (Schlobohm is the U.S. Co-Chair of the Lake Superior Work Group.) Before coming to USEPA, Mehan had served as the Director of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's Office of the Great Lakes. In addition to the engraved plaque shaped like Lake Superior (shown in the photo), Mr. Mehan was also presented an "official" Lake Superior Binational Program shirt and coffee mug.  
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We welcome your questions, comments or suggestions about this month's Significant Activities Report. To be added to or removed from the Email distribution of the Significant Activities Report, please contact Tony Kizlauskas, 312-353-8773, [kizlauskas.anthony@epa.gov](mailto:kizlauskas.anthony@epa.gov).